

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 18465 031127Z

53

ACTION EA-09

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R 031047Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0693

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18465

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: KING DONATES LAND FOR DISTRIBUTION TO FARMER COOPERATIVES

REF: A. BANGKOK A-225 OF 16 AUGUST 1974

SUMMARY: THE PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED AUG. 26 THAT THE KING WILL DONATE LAND HELD BY THE CROWN PROPERTIES BUREAU FOR DISTRIBUTION TO LANDLESS FARMERS. THE KING'S ACT HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON RURAL PROBLEMS AND PLACED THE ROYAL IMPRIMATUR ON LAND REFORM. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT ANNOUNCED TO THE AUGUST 26 CABINET MEETING THAT THE KING HAS ORDERED THAT 50,327 RAI OF LAND (APPROXIMATELY 20,000 ACRES) BE TURNED OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION TO LANDLESS FARMERS. OF THE AREA TO BE TURNED OVER, THE KING PERSONALLY OWNS 327 RAI; THE OTHER 50,000 RAI BELONG TO THE CROWN PROPERTIES BUREAU. THE ACREAGE IS MOSTLY LOCATED IN NAKHON NAYOK PROVINCE, ALTHOUGH PARCELS IN AUTTHAYA, PARACHINBURI AND RATCHABURI PROVINCES ARE ALSO INVOLVED.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 18465 031127Z

2. THE GOVERNMENT IS CHARGED WITH FORMING COOPERATIVES OF LANDLESS FARMERS WHO WILL WORK THE LAND INVOLVED IN THIS ARRANGEMENT IN 25 RAI BLOCKS. THE FARMERS WILL NOT RECEIVE TITLE TO THE LAND, A PRECAUTION TO INSURE SUBSEQUENTLY THAT THE FARMERS DO NOT SELL THE LAND. FAMILIES ALREADY WORKING ON THE DONATED LAND WILL BE GIVEN THE FIRST CHOICE TO JOIN THE NEW COOPERATIVES.

3. THE BANGKOK PRESS HAS HAILED THE KING'S GENEROSITY AS AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL HOLDERS OF LARGE TRACTS. A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, THAWIT KLINPRATHUM, WHO CONTRIBUTED 70 RAI HE OWNS IN PHON DISTRICT OF KHON KAEN PROVINCE IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND, HAVE SAID THAT THEY WOULD FOLLOW SUIT.

4. COMMENT: BY HIS ACTION THE KING HAS PLACED THE ROYAL IMPRIMATUR ON LAND REFORM. EXISTING RTG EFFORTS AT RUNNING COOPERATIVES FOR LANDLESS FARMERS, HOWEVER, HAVE BASICALLY BEEN ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURES, AS HAVE COOPERATIVES IN MANY COUNTRIES. THE KING HAS PLACED HIS PRESTIGE ON THE POLICY LINE, AND FOR HIS SAKE, THE RTG WILL BE UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO ESURE THAT THE LAND IS DISTRIBUTED EXPEDITIOUSLY AND THAT THE COOPERATIVES FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.
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